

INTRODUCTION TO TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Mission Statement

Trinity Presbyterian Church is a loving family of faith that believes in Jesus Christ, leading others to Christian fellowship and teaching God's word through worship and service.

History of the Church

In 1981, The Pee Dee Presbytery decided to launch a new church in the Surfside Beach area of the Grand Strand. The Witness Committee was authorized to purchase a five-acre tract of land on Glenss Bay Road for the site of a new building. The price was \$110,000 to be paid in three annual installments in 1981, 1982 and 1983.

In April 1982, the Presbytery's Witness Committee recommended that Rev. Dr. Cheves K. Ligon be called as an Evangelist to gather people and convene a congregation. The Presbytery approved the call, examined and received Dr. Ligon on May 11, 1982. He and his wife, Margaret, moved to Surfside Beach in June 1982 and began home visitations of prospects.

On the evening of August 4, 1982, thirty-three interested people representing eighteen families gathered to discuss plans for the new church. Of these, twenty-one attendees became charter members.

Dr. Ligon conducted the first worship service on September 5, 1982, at the Lions Club in Surfside Beach, with thirty people present. Roughly half the attendees were members of the First Presbyterian Church of Myrtle Beach. With its chartering on Pentecost, May 29, 1983, Trinity became the last church chartered before the June merger, which ended the north-south split among Presbyterians dating from the Civil War period. Although according to reports from a congregational meeting the week before chartering, up to 80% of the charter members did not realize they were joining the former PCUS.

Contributions from many individuals, plus First Presbyterian Church of Myrtle Beach, the John Calvin, Kingston and Bethesda churches and Belk of Myrtle Beach, made it possible to break ground on February 24, 1985, for Trinity's first building. The first worship service in the new building was on Trinity Sunday, June 2, 1985.

Dr. Ligon retired on October 14, 1986, but continued services as full-time minister through April 30, 1987. Guest ministers supplied the pulpit until a new pastor was called. Dr. Ligon's wife, Margaret, played an active role in the church, especially in the music ministry. She played the piano for many years. The Margaret L. Circle, one of three women's circles at Trinity, is named for her.

On July 26, 1987, the congregation called the Rev. Dr. Jerrold C. Burnside as pastor. Under Dr. Burnside's leadership, they enlarged the original building and constructed an educational building. This building served, and continues to serve, as a pre-school during the week.

At the Officers Retreat held on May 4, 1996, the Session approved "Trinity 2000". This was a vision for Trinity, which included plans for expanding its program, facilities, staff, and membership. There was an emphasis on youth, which led to the current Y2K program. Like

many long-range plans, not all aspects of the dream came to fruition.

In October 1998, ground was broken for a major building project which started in 1999. The sanctuary was enlarged and remodeled. Classrooms, offices, and a Family Life Center with a gym were constructed. During that same year, an after-school program for elementary aged students was started by Y2K. Soon after a summer camp program

As the implementation of the Trinity 2000 dream was underway, Dr. Burnside faced some health issues. To assist him, Rev. James B. Carter was called as Parish Associate in June 2000. Rev. Carter remained Parish Associate until his retirement at the end of 2001.

On Easter Sunday 2002, Dr. Burnside completed his pastorate at Trinity and the Rev. Dr. J. Lewis Johnson joined Trinity as interim pastor. The church in that same year expanded the Y2K program by starting nursery care. In the fall of 2004, Trinity called Rev. Preston Shealy as its third installed pastor.

During the succeeding years, Trinity continued to expand its ministries. An 8:30 AM worship service was re-instituted, and Ash Wednesday and Good Friday worship services were added. For a while, there was a Trinity Youth Connection, a youth group for middle and high school students, and an evening Vacation Bible School program which enhanced the educational ministry of Trinity. The Trinity Y2K program expanded its services to include a Transition Room, a class for children who have turned two and are not ready for preschool. Currently, VBS summer programs are integrated into the summer camp sponsored by Y2K.

Since its founding, Trinity and its congregation have focused on Mission, supporting local causes such as Help for Kids, Mobile Meals, the Christmas Angel tree, and Habitat for Humanity. In addition, they support with financial and material resources places like Thornwell, Presbyterian Homes, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. We might be a small congregation, but we have a large impact on our community.

By 2012, Trinity ordained and installed its first Board of Deacons, a group that is enhancing Trinity's congregational care ministries, thus expanding its mission focus internally as well as externally.

In December 2013, Reverend Shealy answered a call to another church, and Trinity looked forward to another exciting era of change. And that led the church to once again select the Rev. Dr. J. Lewis Johnson as Interim Pastor in February 2014 to continue the church's journey. Rev. Dr. Johnson successfully led the church through the process that resulted in calling Reverend Anthony L. Larson on October 1, 2015 as the fourth installed minister. Pastor Tony and his wife, Heather, have been a welcome addition to Trinity.

As Trinity moves forward by and with faith, Pastor Tony has led the congregation through a variety of challenges, including changing area demographics. While we have an active and full day-care program from Monday to Friday, our congregation is closer to retirement age. Some problems he inherited—and like many pastors, he has dealt with an aging quirky structure. And then came Covid. He successfully moved services online and even provided some on-line fellowship activities and eventually eased Trinity back into in-person gatherings. He is the Immediate Post Moderator of the Presbytery of New Harmony. He also shares his leadership qualities with other PCUSA churches after his appointment as Co-moderator of the General Assembly for 2024-2026.